

Servant-Leaders in Action

Traditional Boss

Motivated by personal drive to achieve.

Highly competitive; independent mindset; seeks to receive personal credit for achievement.

Understands internal politics and uses them to win personally.

Focuses on fast action. Complains about long meetings and about others being too slow.

Relies on facts, logic proof.

Controls information in order to maintain power.

Spends more time telling, giving orders. Sees too much listening or coaching as inefficient.

Feels that personal value comes from individual talents.

Sees network of supporters as power base and perks and titles as a signal to others.

Eager to speak first; feels his/her ideas are more important; often dominates or intimidates opponents.

Uses personal power and intimidation to leverage what he/she wants.

Accountability is more often about who is to blame.

Uses humor to control others.



The Greenleaf Center for Servant-Leadership

Servant As Leader

Motivated by desire to serve others.

Highly collaborative and interdependent; gives credit to others generously.

Sensitive to what motivates others and empowers all to win with shared goals and vision.

Focuses on gaining understanding, input, buy-in from all parties.

Uses intuition and foresight to balance facts, logic, proof.

Shares big-picture information generously.

Listens deeply and respectfully to others, especially those who disagree.

Feels that personal value comes from mentoring and working collaboratively with others.

Develops trust across a network of constituencies; breaks down hierarchy.

Most likely listen first, values others' input.

Uses personal trust and respect to build bridges and do what's best for the "whole".

Accountability is about making it safe to learn from mistakes

Uses humor to lift others up and make it safe to learn from mistakes.

McGee Cooper, A. & Trammell, D. (April, 1999). "From Hero As Leader to Servant As Leader". The Systems Thinker. Pegasus Communications.



After carefully considering Greenleaf's original writings, Larry Spears, CEO of the Greenleaf Center has identified a set of 10 characteristics that he views as being critical to the development of servant-leaders. These 10 are by no means exhaustive. However, they serve to communicate the power and promise that this concept offers.

Use the following indicators to help you gain a sense of your own development related to these characteristics:

5 = **Talent** This comes naturally to me. I almost always do it without even thinking about it.

3 = **Skilled** I do this, but it requires conscious effort and quite a bit of energy to sustain it.

1 = **Unskilled** This is an area that I have not yet developed.

1. **Listening:** Traditionally, leaders have been valued for their communication and decision making skills. Servant-leaders must reinforce these important skills by making a deep commitment to listening intently to others. Servant-leaders seek to identify and clarify the will of a group. They seek to listen receptively to what is being said (and not said). Listening also encompasses getting in touch with one's inner voice, and seeking to understand what one's body, spirit, and mind are communicating.

1 2 3 4 5

2. **Empathy:** Servant-leaders strive to understand and empathize with others. People need to be accepted and recognized for their special and unique spirit. One must assume the good intentions of co-workers and not reject them as people, even when forced to reject their behavior or performance.

1 2 3 4 5

3. **Healing:** Learning to heal is a powerful force for transformation and integration. One of the great strengths of servant-leadership is the potential for healing one's self and others... In *The Servant as Leader*, Greenleaf writes: "There is something subtle communicated to one who is being served and led if, implicit in the compact between the servant-leader and led, is the understanding that the search for wholeness is something that they have.

1 2 3 4 5